(e) wheher they are exempted from payment of tax; if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) Yes.

(b) The New York City Government has filed a Suit in the Supreme Court of the State of New York, County of New York against the Permanent Mission of India (PMI) at New York to recover outstanding real propety taxes, other charges and interest thereon for the period 28-8-1985 to 31-1-2003. The claim is for a total of US$ 16,376,702.09 representing a Principal amount of US$ 4,876,542.20 and interest of US$ 11,500,159.89 as of 1-2-2003. The claim arises out of contention that portion of the Government of India owned PMI building were not used for tax-exempt diplomatic purposes but rather for taxable residential purposes. The Principal claim is on real estate taxes, elevator charges and for sidewalk repairs.

(c) Foreign misions do not pay properly and other taxes to Government of India in respect of the properties owned by them in India.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) Foreign missions are exempt from paying tax in respect of properties owned by them in India. The exeption is granted in terms of Article 23 and 34 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, 1961.

Regional Passport Office Ahmedabad

3085. SHRI LALITBHAI MEHTA:
SHRIMATI SAVITA SHARDA:
Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Regional Passport Office at Ahmedabad, Gujarat is over burdenead resulting in inordinate delay in issuing passports;

(b) whether Government have recived any demand to open Regional Passport Offices at Rajkot and Surat; and

(c) the number of passports issued by Regional Passport Office at Ahmedabad during the last three years in Gujarat with a break up of the seven districts of Saurashtra area and a district of Kutch?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) Yes.

(b) Yes. A Passport Office has been opened at Surat on 16-8-2003. The new Passport Office at Surat will lower the burden on the Regional Passport Office, Ahmedabad and reduce delay in issuance of passports. However, there is no plan to open a Passport Office at Rajkot as the number of applications received from the Saurashtra region do not justify the opening of a separate Passport Office.

(c) The number of passports issued by the Regional Passport Office at Ahemadabad during the last three years with a break up of the seven districts of Saurashtra area and the district of Kutch is given in the enclosed statement.

Statement

The number of passports issued by the Regional Passport Office, Ahmedabad during the years 2000,2001 and 2002 with a break up of the districts of Saurashtra Region and the district of Kutch.

(A)	Year	2000	2001	2002
	Total passports issued by ROP Ahmedabad	1,46,977	1,88,904	2,00,067
(B)	Break up of the districts of Saurashtra Region and the District of Kutch			

SI.No.	Name of the District	Year 2000	2001	2002
1.	Ampeli	685	786	838
2.	Surender Nagar	768	733	764
3.	Bhavnagar	2,475	2,620	2,975
4.	Junagarh	2,095	2,315	2,644
5.	Jamnagar	3,391	3,202	2,285
6.	Porbandar	1,657	1,760	2,242
7.	Rajkot(Urban)	4,387	4,462	1,485
8.	Rajkot(Rural)	1,393	1,720	2,013
9.	Kutch	4,288	3,900	4,507
	TOTAL	21139	21498	19753